Monks House, Rodmell. Friday May 1st 1931

Here we are-- we crossed yesterday afternoon, having , as you foretold, run into our first fine day. It is entirely divine here. But naturally after sitting in a cold bedroom at Brantome, and having forgotten my fur coat, I contracted a sore throat, which is now running from my nose and eyes in a streaming cold, so I am stupid as a pat. Also my good English steel pen is lost, and the gold one intolerable. So I pick out these few words with infinite pain. Odd how ones fingers lose the tip of writing.

a rat

Hence, my many observations upon your profound and interesting remarks re society, re health, must wait. All I will whisper, or rather croack now is, that thanks to L. I have devised steps by which I think society will be considerably modified this summer. Not that that cuts off certain military musicians. But again, I mus t wait , since all my letters remain unanswered. As to seeing a doctor who will cure my headaches, no, Ethel No. And whats more you will seriously upset L, if you suggest it. We spent I daresay a hundred pounds when it mean selling my few rings and necklaces to pay them, without any more result than that if I get a pain, go to bed, eat meat and it goes. No other cure has ever been found-- and the disease-- well, all the nerves meet in the spine: its simple enough. No complicated mysteries about my headaches. Not like your fybroid ears, which Im delighted to think now hear the nightingales. I say, it will be nice seeing nobody, except one or two people. Crossing yesterday, we ran into the wife of my old lover Sidney Waterlow. Sh told us how she had claimed precedence from Lady Clifford on the passes of Himalaya--that would have been my fate. So good bye. I'llwrite when I am less sore in the throat boiled in the eyes and red of the nose.

Sir G. Savage
Sir M. Craig.
Sir M. Wright
P. Hystop.
&c. &c.

V.

Laura feeling proud as the night hags, & we whether she dont get the feeling that here's a shallow egotistical cock crowing creature. to bother what people say of her. And The Cause suffers: I mean, I feel, what will public say of the vanity of women? But then I dont believe in Cause. And she's a writer, not a ~~musici~~ musician: all the same, had Laura Riding (in Time & Tide)

Oh dear. I had meant to buy that book, had the address lying on my table — & now of course I am ashamed - please send me the bill I know it's something like 3/7 3/4; it was the getting the order that was inseparable. 9 May 1931

A vast amount of business has accumulated — (1) L. says - for some good reason) dont know what — that we cant go to Bradfield that day. So here is the paper returned.

(2) Here is the handkerchief found in the car. L therefore attributes to you.

(3) About being "misunderstood" (but I thought that was the title of a novel)

'God' I said to Leonard, after you had gone "what is clear to me is that Ethel, with all her threedom, will never, never understand me."

"But I'm the only person who does" said L:

No: handkerchief has been sent to the wash.

"Yes & Shakespeare" I said – on top of which comes your letter, saying the very same thing only t'other way round, of F.W. Montague. & H.B. I think it perfectly true two, though whether it is to be accounted for as you suggest by my being a Don's daughter from Cambridge, & you a General's daughter from Aldershot, I don't know. What odd is that we are both understood (I'll agree that this is an unfortunate term) by knocks which happen, but I've no time to follow this up, – that all interwoven, complex, hidden, – curious tangle – which we both are – are abraded by human contacts – fall shut up, enclosed, protected by meeting (in Tavistock Sq^re Day) but take down Montaigne, take down Shakespeare, & at once flow, flower, expand & are at rest – Only Jn. being so damned practical, for ever look for understanding: & I, in whom Cambridge has bred a large measure of (so alleged) melancholy, never look for it now: yet a look at Ethel, saying, with resignation; & when day half = what in my mind. Yes. Your article was a good deal better than I expected: that I agree: but now, read

Rota 2. 4. 43.

No: handkerchief has been sent to the wash.

"Yes & Shakespeare" I said – on top of which comes your letter, saying the very same thing only t'other way round, of V. W. Montaigne, & H. B. I think it perfectly true two, though whether it is to be accounted for on yr suggest by my being a Don's daughter from Cambridge, & you a General's daughter from Aldershot, I don't know. What odd is that we are both understood (I'll agree that this is an unfortunate term) by knots which suppers, but I've no time to follow this up. – That all interwoven, complex, hidden, – arrow simple – which we both are – are abraded by human contacts – fat shut up, enclosed, protected by meaning (in Tavistock Sq^re Day) but take down Montaigne, take down Shakespeare, & at once flow, flower, & spawn & are at rest – Only for, being so damned practical, for ever look for understanding, & I, in whom Cambridge has bred a large measure of unalloyed melancholy, never look for it – new: sit & look at Ethel, raging, with resignation; & utter my half = what in my mind. Yr. Jane's article was a good deal better than Turner: that I agree: but new, real

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Rota 2.4.63

52 T.S.
12th May. 31

No Ethel, dear, no; I didnt make my meaning plain. I wasnt alluding to any particular instance, of misunderstanding, so much as to the general impossibility, which over comes me sometimes, of any understanding between two people. This instance--your behaviroury about critics and your music--doesnt seem to me of importance. That is, if I give my mind seriously to it for five minutes--a thing I seldom do-- I can imagine , by imagining you as a whole,— with allyour outriders and trembling thickets of personality, exactly why you do it; and sympathise; and admird; and feel the oddest mixt ure of admiration and pity and championship as much as I used to feel for a white tailless cat of ours which we forgot to have castrated. This superb brute used to spend his nights fighting; and at last got so many wounds that they wouldnt heal; and he had to be put out of life by a vet. And I respected him; and I respect you. Only I think you dont altogether realise how, to the casual onlooker, you seem ~~Only I dont think you altogether realise~~ how it strikes an outsider. I think sometimes you let the poison ferment. Never mind. I cant altogether lay hands on my meaning. The other thing anyhow interests me much more-- the impossibility of one person understanding another. Oh, and when I write to you, I put it off till the end of the day when my careful typed letters to publishers and so on are done with and I write with a flick of the pen, leaving things to be understood. Hence my unintelligible remark about 'not believeing in causes.' This, as I see, now, reverts to Murrys life of Lawrence; the whole doctrine of preaching, of causes; of converting; teaching &c which has been working vaguely in my mind and penetraing into my Waves; so that I let it fly, casually, in my letter, without a word to explain it. I think what I mean is that all teaching at the present moment seems to me a blasphemy; this hooked itself on to your cause; and so, ~~obliquely~~,

obliquely, to Laura Riding, whom I despise for writing perpetually to explain her own ~~cause~~ cause when reviwers say what is true--that she is a damned bad poet. There! Not very well put I admit; but hurried.

What is the misery that weighs you down so that you cant write? Talking of miseries, I went in with L. to see the furniture and found Mrs H. sitting at her desk(about to be sold) as pink and cool as a rose; very kindly. Would we go everywhere? I felt much disconcerted. I felt how awful for her to be selling at her age--and ~~myre~~ me to be lounging round. But she carried herself like a general on a battlefield; there was a fat critical, censorious daughter in an arm chair; Mrs H. was superb; as if it were a nuisance, shutting up ones houses, selling every stith, but not a thing to cry over. If one must squander twenty mililion this is the way to do it. We may look in this afternoon, partly from curiosity. and buy a glooking glass.

About Friday--lord, thats our black hole day. Begins at three; goes on till seven. And I choke with a tickel in my throat and cant talk. I dont see any use in your coming on top of Mrs Hueffer, Mr Plomer, Hugh Walpole, et cetera. Wednesday I'm in; also perhaps Thursday; Saturday we go for a walk (not away) I dont know what to suggest, therefore; but leave you to make your own tersm; and shallbe happy to stroke the head of the indomitable and uncastrated cat.

By the way excuse typing; I'm so sick of my utterly ~~disgrade~~ disgraceful pen — look — it wont make a single letter right. When I've time. I'm going to the city to look through a wholesale pen seller - surely there must be one pen, somewhere - one heart for me to share (it sounds like an old song)

V.

Rota 2.6.43

52 Tavistock Sqre. 18 ~~17~~ May 1931

It occurs to me, at L's suggestion, that I probably misled you about the writing table, on the telephone. I did buy a writing table; but not the one you Julia was writing at. That, which I coveted, went for £37- to whom I don't know: too much for me: & the £6.10 one was the high mimeme rosewood desk-cabinet in the drawing room, a far less distinguished object, but gaudily right to impose order on the obliquities & diversities of my studies. It stands over me at the moment like a policeman.

Behold your envelope, just come. The soldiers daughter must have been in a bad way when she wrote Woking. But I somehow infer, atmospherically, that Jon sulphur & rotten eggs are lightening. I think Wednesday, 4, will be ok right. I don't see why not, at this moment. of this time you are in London anyhow.

(But it odd - I drew my new pen, (which is not ok) loved work.), said, now of course) can write a full & expressive letter; that is my perpetual illusion. I never can. I am always interrupted: my page is never filled; just serves to throw ash & dust onto. But the illusion persists that this time I am going to write a long, entirely satisfactory letter. Perhaps letter writing is a thing one does in youth. Yes: you ran rather flown with wine last time you came. I had a brief lesson of thinking well anyhow these days, (or the days)

are brim full. I'm only to seal them up: send them to Mrs. Jarrett (a village girl who had a baby through falling downstairs with a typhus water, 20/- to hell with Rota 2: V.63
the seed) the things done. But yesterday was vile beyond words.
Couldn't stagger along over the burning pebbles at all. In fact, I can't
help thinking that this book contains the dearest of all my habits.
And hits me for this: the tickling throat has taken away all
pleasure in smoking. Not a single cigarette have I enjoyed these seven days.
The Black Hole was as well as can be expected - that is to say,
L. & I looked at each other, about 6.30 (it had begun at 3 marks)
& signalled, Thank the Lord, only another hour & it will be!' Whether
this is the right mood in which to see the human face divine I don't know
how, about Cannes. Of course, & of course, I'm not such a pacifist as to
deny that practical Evils must be met to the sword: I admit
fighting to the death for Rights, wages, peace, & so on: what I can't
abide is the man who wishes to convert other men's minds; that
fanfaronny with beliefs seems to me impertinent, insolent, Corrupt beyond
measure. I never pass through Hyde Park without cursing pharately
Every God inventor there. This is partly because, unbaptized as
we were, our religious friends, the Jones Cousins in particular, the
Daughters of Fitzjames, tasked & agonized us as children by
perpetual attempts at conversion. As they were ugly women,
who sweated, I conceived a greater hatred for them than ever
for anyone. And even now, when no one tries, I still draw in —
shiver at the Inspector — he's got a finger in my mind.
I must try to read Tobit one of these days: but the repulsion of the
Early book, whatever it was, still hangs in my mind. And I
can't read when I'm writing: everything flies off at such an odd
angle (This is another pen: no: no: I must reorientate my life —
a new pen: no smoking)
Now this is not in the least the letter I meant to
write: but the illusion of the present
letter still hovers.

Stack 4 12 Yes "Like it now?" A lady who wrote to Mrs. Stark about your books.

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are brim full. I'm only to seal them up: send them to Mr. Jarrett (a village lad who had a baby through falling downstairs with a typewriter, so the said) the thing done. But yesterday was vile beyond words. Couldn't stagger along over the burning pebbles at all. In fact, I can't help thinking that this book contains the dearest of all my habits. And hits me for this: the tickling throat has taken away all pleasure in smoking. Not a single cigarette have I enjoyed these seven days. The Blackhole was as well as can be expected - that is to say, L. & I worked at each other, about 6.30 (it had begun at 3 sharp) & signalled, Thank the Lord, only another hour & it left! Whether this is the right mood in which to see the human face divine I don't know, about Causes. Of course, & of course, I'm not such a pacifist as to deny that practical Evils must be met to the sword: I admit fighting to the death for Vote, wages, peace, & so on: what I can't abide is the man who wishes to convert other men's minds; that fampering with beliefs seem to me impertinent, insolent, cowardly beyond measure. I've seen him through Hyde Park without cursing separately Every God inventor there. This is partly because, unbaptized as we were, our religious friends, the Jones Cousins in particular, the Daughters of Fitzjames, parsed & agonized us as children by perpetual attempts at conversion. As they were ugly women, who sweated, I conceived a greater hatred for them than Even for anyone. And even now, when no one tries, I still draw in — shiver at the Inspector — he's got a foyer in my mind. I will try to read Tobit one of these days: but the repulsion of the early book, whatever it was, still hangs in my mind. And I can't read when I'm writing: everything flies off at such an odd angle (This is another pen: no: no: I must unbalance my life — a new pen: no smoking)

Now this is not in the least the letter I meant to write: but the illusion of the perfect letter still hovers. a Mr.

Stack to me "Yes" "This is Turn Stack?" A

A lady who writes to talk about your books: to hell with her.
Rota 2. V. 63

Mr Stack. "I. Come in. 9. He comes & stands & stares" "This is Stack: I've taken it

are brim full. I'm only to seal them up: send them to Mrs. Jarrett (a village girl who had a baby through falling downstairs with a typhe waiter, 20/- to hell with your work: Rota 2. 4.63
Who said) the thing done. But yesterday was vile beyond words.
Couldn't stagger along over the burning pebbles at all. In fact, I can't
help thinking that this book contains the disease of my stomach.
And pity me for this: the sickly throat has taken away all
pleasure in smoking. Not a single cigarette have I enjoyed these seven days.
The Black hole was as well as can be expected - That is to say,
L. & I looked at each other, about 6.30 (it had begun at 3 sharp)
& signalled, Thank the Lord, only another hour & it's left'. Whether
this is the right mood in which to see the human face divine I don't know
how, about Cannes. Of course, & of course, I'm not such a pacifist as to
deny that practical Evils must be met to the sword: I admit
fighting to the death for Poles, wages, peace, & so on: what I can't
abide is the man who wishes to convert other men's minds; that
tampering with beliefs seems to me impertinent, insolent, corrupt beyond
measure. I never pass through Hyde Park without cursing separately
Every God inventor there. This is partly because, unbaptized as
we were, our religious friends, the Jowett Conyers in particular, the
Daughters of Fitzjames, tasked & agonized us as children by
perpetual attempts at conversion. As they were ugly women,
who sweated, I conceived a greater hatred for them than Ever
for anyone. And even now, when no one tries, I still draw in —
shiver at the profession — he's got a foyer in my mind.
I will try to read Tobit one of these days: but the repulsion of the
Early book, whatever it was, still poisons my mind. And I
can't read when I'm writing: everything flies off at such an odd
angle (This is another pen: no: no: I must recollect my life —
a new pen: no smoking)
Now this is not in the least the letter I meant to
write: but the illusion of the present
letter still hovers. A Mrs.

Stack to us Jun: "Like is Burne Stack?" "A lady who wishes to talk about

Friday. 12 June 1931

No, I haven't got a moment, or a thought, because I've been working for me, very hard at this bloody book— 3 hours this morning, & 2 from 5 to 7. This evening (the publishers yesterday says he must have it. Just have him sent, by the end of the month) all I therefore can attempt to say is that je, certainly, in one word, ALL cards flat on table, faces up. That's my disposition; nothing else is any use at all. But of course you may not feel so disposed,